



USDA  
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

# Summer Brings Both Challenges & Rewards

655 Parfet Street, RM E200C Lakewood, CO 80215-5505 720-544-2863-P 720-544-2965-F

## Highlights

by  
Allen Green  
State Conservationist



Spring and summer tend to be our busiest seasons and they are upon us. This is the time of year that we (at all levels within the State) typically head to the field to work one-on-one with our customers.

It has become increasingly difficult to keep this seasonal tradition afloat, but I'm confident that it is not an impossibility. I encourage you to make time, as I will, to go out and meet with your customers face-to-face on their turf.

In addition to the everyday processes that have made getting out of the office a bit more difficult than in years past, many, as we all know, have been engulfed with managing our "backlog" of contracts. Although the requirements have presented challenges for us, getting a handle on this business procedure is critical to the agency and our customers.

We have made great strides in the State to "get caught up" but we are well aware that more assistance is needed in certain areas and I am committed to delivering that assistance. Our national office has also been instrumental in hearing our concerns regarding the rigid requirements and timelines and, as a result of one of their "field visits" to Colorado, has offered relief to extend other deadlines.

In these times of increased workload, communication is vital to assure the messages of what is working, as well

as what isn't, are shared. This was one of the reasons I held the first of many all-employee teleconferences. I'd like to thank all who participated and I encourage you, as I've indicated during the session, to share with your supervisors and me your successes and concerns.

We are on target for a great summer and I urge you to take advantage of all of the tools we have available (mobile field offices, for example) that will help you accomplish your goals and requirements, as well as accomplish one of the foundation tasks of our organization by getting out into the field.

Have a great summer.

### inside this issue:

Tornado Rips Through Holly	2
Kiowa CD Profits from Tree Sales	3
One to Grow On	4
Earth Team Recognizes Volunteers	4
Kids Pucker Up at GJ Water Festival	5
State Office News	6
Area Office News	8
Water Quality Through Conservation	13
Techno Tips	14
Dalmation Toadflax-Control Methods	14
Rick Isom Remembered	15
Camp Rocky Announcement	16
Small Wind Workshop Well-Attended	16
Employee Spot Light - Ed Spence	17
2007 Earth Team Coloring Contest Awards	18
Walk A Mile In My Boots Program	18
Asian Pacific Islander Month	19
Landowner Workshop/Birding Tour	20
Mobile Irrigation Lab	21



# Tornado rips through Holly

## Local NRCS Field Office provides aid

The tornado that hit Holly, Colorado, on March 28, 2007, had the Holly NRCS Field Office busy and hopping for two weeks following its devastation to the community.

The Holly office and their families assisted in checking houses for injuries on the night of the tornado, cleaning up scattered household items, fallen trees, and a variety of other jobs.

The Holly office also helped to haul debris, pack up homes, clean pastures and fields, assist the Red Cross and



*photo courtesy of Area 3*

A center pivot that was damaged in the Holly tornado.

Salvation Army with meals, babysit for families in need, and provide lodging for displaced families.

The Holly office also helped the Forest Service examine damaged trees in the community's park and other areas to determine survivability.

A workshop was held for public and city crews on how to trim damaged trees and how to secure Federal dollars for replacement trees.

The Holly office handed out 115 Colorado Blue Spruce seedlings (one per family) to grade-school children in an effort to replace trees that were damaged.

The Holly office crew's Global Positioning System tracked the tornado's path, which allowed the office to generate maps for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and for the town of Holly to use at their public town meeting.

This information was useful to the other agencies that were involved in the community's disaster recovery efforts.



*photo courtesy of Area 3*

The tornado that hit Holly leaves a farm devastated.

The Holly office collected and forwarded documentation to the Farm Service Agency for their Emergency Conservation Program.

Information on additional funding will be provided to producers with damaged conservation practices that were originally installed under cost-share assistance. The Holly office sent emails about the tornado that included pictures, both ground and aerial, to other NRCS offices.

### *Additional facts about the Holly tornado...*

The Holly tornado was as wide as two football fields, and carved a destructive path through this small southeastern Colorado town, killing two persons and injuring 11 others. Initial reports said five homes were destroyed and up to 65 other homes were severely damaged when the twister roared through Holly shortly after 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 28, 2007.

# Kiowa Conservation District profits from annual tree and shrub sales

Article and photos by Katherine Burse-Johnson  
Public Affairs Specialist

**T**ree and shrub sales in Colorado's conservation districts are common and provide a strong source of revenue.

Recently, Kiowa Conservation District (CD), located in Franktown, Colorado, held its own annual seedling tree and shrub sale and the event proved to be a success.

"This program has been a good money-making project for our district over the years," said Charlie Carnahan, President, Kiowa CD.

This year, the District received 132 orders for 16,000 trees to distribute to landowners in western Elbert County.

The program aims to promote conservation on the ground by encouraging landowners to plant trees and serves as a joint effort of Kiowa CD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery.

"All trees are pre-sold to landowners, supplied by the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery in Fort Collins, and delivered here for pick up," said Bob Whitehead, Vice President, Kiowa CD.



Bob Whitehead, Vice President, Kiowa Conservation District, assists with tree sales.

The process to order trees and shrubs begins in November and runs through March. An order form is sent out to local residents and, upon placing an order, the landowner is sent a postcard informing him or her of where and when to pick up their order. Tree and shrub orders are usually available for pickup



Sue Link, Secretary/Treasurer, Kiowa Conservation District (r), helps a customer with her purchase.

sometime in April.

Landowners can choose from bare root, deciduous, and conifer trees and the cost per 50 lots is \$31.00. Potted regular trees can also be purchased and are sold in lots of 30 for \$44 along with small potted trees that cost \$27 for 30 lots.

The sales of tree and shrubs provide conservation benefits such as erosion control, wildlife habitat, improved air and water quality, and energy conservation; therefore, sales are restricted to landowners who have a minimum of two acres of land and who use the seedlings for living snow fences, windbreaks, and other conservation purposes.

"These seedlings cannot be used as ornamentals or for landscaping plantings nor can they be resold as a living plant," said Pam Brewster, District Administrator, Kiowa CD.

Established in 1941, the Kiowa CD consists of seven board members who volunteer their time to work with District residents to help them discover the value of conservation as it relates to their profits, their lives and their children's future.

## One to Grow



**The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you're willing to work.**

~ Oprah Winfrey

**The major difference between the big shot and the little shot is the big shot is just a little shot who kept on shooting.**

~ Zig Ziglar

**Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.**

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

**There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.**

~ Roger Staubach

**Ability can take you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.**

~ Zig Ziglar

**We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them.**

~ Kahlil Gibran

**Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.**

~ Viktor Frankl

**"It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."**

~ J.K. Rowling

# Colorado Earth Team



## Recognizes Its Volunteers

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) took pleasure in recognizing and honoring its Earth Team Volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 15-21, 2007.

In fiscal year 2006, 1,469 Earth Team volunteers contributed 48,733 hours in helping the NRCS and its partners in Colorado. That's the equivalent of employing another 23 full-time employees.

This year's volunteers at the State Office level included Christine Lucero, Kathy Morgan, and Rynne Sheeley. They were recognized for their outstanding efforts and contributions to the Colorado Earth Team Program. Each Area Office held its own recognition for volunteers.

The Earth Team Program, created in 1985, offers all types of



Allen Green, State Conservationist, presents Christine Lucero, Earth Team Volunteer, with an award at the National Volunteer Week celebration.

opportunities to anyone over the age of 14 who is interested in volunteering and making a positive difference for the nation's natural resources.

Earth Team Volunteers help NRCS conservationists provide everything from conservation technical assistance to teaching and generating awareness about conservation through the use of community projects.

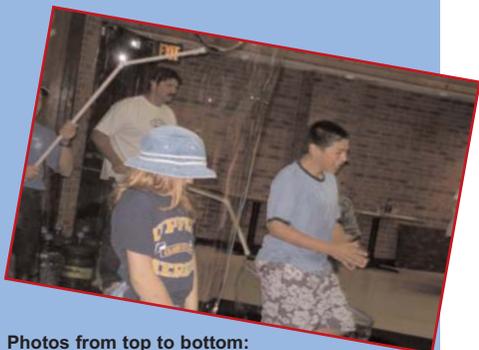
"We are proud of the dedicated volunteers and employees who have committed their time and talents to conserving and protecting soil, water and wildlife for their community and everyone in it. We hope that National Volunteer Week will motivate others to volunteer their time and talent to help NRCS and its mission as we continue Helping People Help the Land," said Allen Green, State Conservationist.



Kathy Morgan, Earth Team Volunteer, receives a certificate from Allen Green, State Conservationist, at the National Volunteer Week celebration.



# Kids Pucker Up at Grand Junction Water Festival



**Photos from top to bottom:**

1. Student kisses fish
2. Lenny Lang, Soil Conservationist, demonstrates Snow Survey Model
3. Carl Zimmerman, Colorado State Conservation Board, lectures about watersheds
4. Students enjoy bubbles

**W**hat do an eagle, an otter, and a kissing fish have in common? The answer was discovered by more than 1,900 fifth-graders of Mesa County who attended the 14th Annual Children's Water Festival held at the Mesa College campus on May 21-22.

Fifth graders, teachers and volunteers attended seven of the 43 water classes that were offered. All classes attended the exhibit hall under the watchful eye of **Lloyd Reed**, Soil Conservationist, Grand Junction Field Office, who also is a member of the Water Festival planning board. Here the attendees were able to learn about the various agencies, and also had the opportunities to engage in fun activities such as the bubble maker.

**Lenny Lang** and **Dennis Gorsett**, both soil conservationists at the Grand Junction Field Office, taught a class on snow survey aided by NRCS volunteer, **Justin Robbins**. The Mesa and Plateau-Valley Conservation Districts were represented by **Dawne Salazar**, Conservation District Manager, and NRCS volunteer, **Tracy Shepherd**, as they demonstrated water pollution.

**Sandra Geer**, Area Administrative Coordinator, Grand Junction Area Office, volunteered as a greeter to assist teachers and students find their classes; while **Carl Zimmerman**, Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), **Dan Thompson**, Wildlife Biologist, and **Debbie Blume**, CSCB, presented the demonstration water trailer.

The many Government Agencies partnered with corporate and small local businesses to make this event a success. It required many planning meetings as well as a lot of people working behind the scenes, stuffing 2,000 bags with literature and water bottles that were given to the students, teachers, and helpers who attended the Festival.

The Water Festival was sponsored by the Ute Water Conservancy District, the City of Grand Junction and the Clifton Water District.

# on the pulse

# State Office News

**Chris Pacheco,**

Assistant Snow Survey Supervisor, recently interviewed with meteorologist Chris Tomer, from Fox 31 News, on snow survey and measurements. The interview took place at Geneva Park snow course, which is located outside of Grant, CO, near Guanella Pass.



**The NRCS State Office** and Earth Team welcomes **Ryanne Sheeley**. She began volunteering with NRCS in March. She was referred to the agency through Jefferson County Colorado Works Career Services and volunteers 32 hours of her time, four days each week.

Her duties as an Administrative Clerk include

working in Excel spreadsheets, scanning, researching, copying, filing, and answering the telephones.

Prior to coming to NRCS, Ryanne was a Secretary at Paralyzed Veterans of America for five years. She also attended Red Rocks Community College and is one class semester shy of receiving her Associates Degree for Administrative Assistants.

When not volunteering with NRCS, Ryanne enjoys spending time with her two sons Trevor, 8, and Owen, 13 months. Her hobbies include skateboarding, fishing, and crocheting.



**Ila Binard, State**

Administrative Officer, hosted the first annual district

conservationist training. The training, called "The Effective District Conservationist," was conducted to provide DCs with effective tools to perform their duties and responsibilities.



The DCs were trained in topics such as identifying and using tools to track and manage workload, scheduling, delegation, time management, monitoring progress, and assessing accomplishments.

Approximately 16 DCs attended this meeting with an additional six DCs serving as trainers.

Similar meetings are scheduled to occur on a yearly basis.

**In April, Allen Green,** State Conservationist, **Lynn Hahn,** Budget Officer, **C.W. Scott,** District Conservationist, Fort Morgan Field Office, and the Fort Morgan Field Office staff hosted a visit from Sara Braasch, West Regional Assistant Chief, Patricia Kelly, NRCS Chief Financial Officer (CFO); Michael Sanders, Senior Advisor to the Chief; and Yenie Tran, Special Assistant to the Chief.

The visitors were treated to a tour of Steve Treadway's Wetland Reserve Program Easement, as well as a tour of various conservation practices in Morgan County. They had an opportunity to learn more about NRCS programs and field office operations.

In addition, the group had a chance to visit with state office staff in Programs, Financial Management, and Operations to learn more about state office functions. Most of the group is new to NRCS and this was a great opportunity to educate them about our agency.

**NRCS in Colorado has** acquired two mobile irrigation labs (MILs) that will help landowners evaluate the effectiveness of irrigation water management and salinity management on site.

Information that traditionally takes up to five weeks to gather can now be generated instantly through MILs. The benefit is a savings in water, energy, time, and money for the users. One MIL is located in Lamar and the other in Montrose.

To request use of the MIL for your field office, contact **Jason Peel,** Irrigation Water Management Specialist, 720-544-2863.



**Congratulations to**

Joanne Smith (now Mrs. Stockton), Title Voucher Examiner, Financial Management, on her recent marriage to John Stockton.

Joanne and John were married on Friday, April 13, in Grants, New Mexico. They had been together for six years prior to making it official.



**NRCS Human**

Resources recently conducted a training for District Conservationists on their responsibilities to new and returning Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) students.

The one-day workshop provided information about

SCEP and also reviewed work schedules, training for the SCEPs, and general administration policies.

More than 16 DCs attended the workshop and a total of 15 SCEP students are being assigned to these DCs. Human Resources is looking to make this an annual training workshop.

**A WORD FROM GSA**

*(info courtesy of Rocky Mountain News)*

**Did You Know?**

- The average American drives 29 miles per day.
- An SUV costs about \$113 per month in gas.
- A small sedan costs about \$63 a month in gas.
- Average vehicle use is 550 gallons of gasoline per year.

**Colorado NRCS Job Vacancies**

**Soil Conservationist**  
 GS-0457-7/9  
 2 vacancies (Delta and Montrose)  
 Closes: 6/29/07  
 Contact: Valerie Baughman,  
 720-544-2871

**Multimedia Specialist**  
 GS-1082-11  
 Located in State Office  
 Closes: 7/1/07  
 Contact: Henry Jackson  
 720-544-2825

**Soil Scientist - MLRA Soil Survey Leader**  
 GS-0470-12  
 3 vacancies (Alamosa, Ft. Morgan, Pueblo)  
 Closes: 7/5/07  
 Contact: Henry Jackson  
 720-544-2825

# on the pulse

## Area Office News

### Area One

**Dennis Davidson,**

District Conservationist, and **Stephen Jaouen,** Rangeland Management Specialist, Glenwood Springs Field Office, discussed control methods for cheatgrass at a recent annual spring weed meeting that was held at the Silt Fire Station on April 12.

This included species selection, seedbed prep, timing of seeding, and care of grass seedlings.

NRCS partnered with the Bookcliff, Mount Sopris and South Side conservation districts to host this informative meeting.

These same organizations just finished a five-week workshop entitled "Quality Living on your Rural Land," for new and small acreage landowners. It is a yearly program that introduces landowners to water management, pasture manage-

ment, and other resources.

Mike Kishimoto, Soil Conservation Technician, designed and conducted job inspections for repairs to the Davie Ditch slide, north of Rifle.

The ditch is below Rifle Gap and slid on May 10, affecting several hundreds of acres of hay fields. Repairs were completed on May 21.



**On April 28, it was all** about reviving and re-vegetating when NRCS, Williams Production, the Bookcliff Conservation District, and the Colorado State Forest Service along with members of the Rifle High School football team and volunteers

from the community planted more than 3,000 pinyon pines and juniper seedlings throughout a burn area in Rifle.

This heroic effort came less than a year after the Red Apple Fire burned nearly 830 acres near Rifle, turning green, high-desert forest into blackened and charred ground.

The fire started on Aug. 31, 2006, after a homeowner using a trimming device set the tool down in brush. Dry weeds caught fire, and the blaze quickly gained momentum.

One house, three out-buildings, domestic pets, and wildlife were burned in the fire.



## Area Two

### The Greeley Area

Office and NRCS Colorado bids a fond farewell to Colleen Winchester, Ag Engineer, Greeley Field Office. Colleen accepted a Soil Conservationist position with the NRCS in Pendleton, Oregon.

### The Byers Field Office

assisted the East Adams County Conservation District with another successful tree sales season with over 23,000 trees that were sold at the Quint Valley Fair Ground.



### Dan Moreno, Soil

Conservation Technician, and **Renee Koch**, Soil Conservationist, both of Sterling Field Office, worked with students in the Work Education Studies (WES) program for Sterling High School in recognition of Earth Day.

The field office and the students at the high school participated in clean-up at the Overland Trail Recreation Area fishing pond.

The WES program allows students to gain work experience through volunteering with various organizations.



### The Brighton Field

Office and 18 students from the Fort Lupton High School Agriculture and their teacher planted nearly 300 trees on April 17 in honor of Earth Day 2007.

Everyone worked diligently planting the trees on Victor Androvich's, Brighton Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office, property near Hudson, Colorado.

Androvich participates in the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) to improve wildlife habitat along a degraded riparian corridor and a pond on the property.

Norland Hall, Fort Morgan District Forester with the Colorado State Forest Service, brought his valuable expertise to the site.

In addition to tree planting, the students learned about the different soil types, different species

selection, improvement in wildlife habitat, and different tree identification.

The Brighton NRCS field office would like to thank the Platte Valley Conservation District, Androvich for allowing the students to assist him in this project, and Mark Cronquist, Adams County Small Acreage Coordinator.



### John Fusaro, Range

Conservationist, Fort Collins Field Office, assisted with the State Soils Judging contest that was held in Fort Collins.

Fusaro also gave a talk on grazing management to the Colorado State University Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

### The Julesburg Field

Office and Sedgwick County Conservation District partnered in a successful Irrigation Water Management and Salinity Conference recently.

Over forty agricultural irrigators and producers attended and Jason Peel, Irrigation Water Management Specialist provided information on the agency's two Mobile Irrigation Labs.

## Area Three

### **Rich Rhoades, District**

Conservationist, Pueblo Field Office, is working with Pueblo School District 60 on a \$10,000 Tapestry Grant the District received. It was the only one granted in Colorado.

The District wants to create a reclamation garden at the Steelworks Museum in Pueblo. The project will involve elementary, middle, and high school students. The program encourages students to seek science-based professions.

With grant money, students will take field trips to Victor (strip mines), Walsenburg (coal mines), and Comanche Power Plant (how minerals are used).

Rhoades' role is as a technical advisor and as a teacher. He will teach one or two high school classes on basic reclamation considerations.

### **The Holly and Lamar**

field offices took the NRCS Strategic Plan display to the Lamar Farm, Home, and Garden Show in April. They also gave two presentations on the effects of the Dust Bowl on the area, and how conservation by private landowners has helped pro-

tect our natural resources.

### **The Pueblo Field Office**

hosted a workshop on riparian plantings, primarily willow and cottonwood. Greg Fenchel, Los Lunas, NM Plant Materials Center, presented new potting, planting, and watering techniques that the Plant Materials Center staff has been working on for the past 15 years. The workshop was held at the Greenway Nature Center in Pueblo.



### **The Kiowa County**

Conservation District, Kiowa County Farm Bureau, Eads NRCS field office, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), Kiowa County CSU Cooperative Extension, and J & L Farms sponsored a Mountain Plover nest marking demonstration in mid-April.

RMBO biologists showed how they survey fields, mark any nests with lath or flags, and provide the landowner with a map of nest locations so the nests can be avoided during cultivation. The goal of the program is to help raise

producers' awareness of the Mountain Plovers to increase nesting success on cultivated land.

### **The Holly Field Office,**

along with Brady McElroy, Lamar field office, completed a drainage survey and land leveling project for the State of Colorado and City of Holly as the city developed lots for the placement of the FEMA trailers and mobile homes for those families who lost homes in the Holly tornado.

### **The Kiowa County**

Conservation District, Eads Field Office staff, volunteers, and local school children planted trees on the Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation property just south of Eads.



### **The Eads Field Office**

staff assisted with pre-dedication work for the Sand Creek Massacre Site in Kiowa County.

### **Marvin Watson,**

District Conservationist, and **B.J. Jones,** Soil Conservationist, from the Eads Field Office, assisted with natural resource inventory work and guidance.

*cont. on page 11*

area news cont.

**Marty Miller, Soil**

Conservation Technician, Eads Field Office, developed maps that the event planners used.



**The Trinidad Field**

Office gave an Earth Day presentation at the Hoehne School and the Trinidad Middle School. They discussed Recycling, Water Quality, and Cultural Resources.

**The Las Animas Field**

Office and Bent Conservation District hosted a 5th grade field day in early May. Also on April 30, the District hosted a tree workshop focusing on tree planting and care.

**The Northeast**

Prowers Conservation District and Holly NRCD field office hosted a Tree Pruning Workshop in early May. Colorado State Forest Service personnel provided tips on trimming trees.

Due to the winter blizzards and spring tornado that hit Holly, the District felt this was a very worthwhile workshop to have.

**The Hugo Field Office**

staff went to Hugo, Karval,

and Limon school districts to talk to the 5th graders about Agricultural By-Products.



**Recent range work-**

shops/schools include those held in Salida, Agate, and Simla.

The Salida school was sponsored by the Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Salida Ranger District, Fremont County Cattlemen's Association, Colorado State University (CSU) Cooperative Extension (CE), NRCS, and the Upper Arkansas Conservation District.

Some of the subjects covered included grass, forb, and shrub growth, rangeland monitoring, grazing management, and rangeland nutrition.

Dave Bradford, USFS; John Murray, retired NRCS; Floyd Reed, retired USFS; and Robbe Baird LeValley, CSU CE, were the instructors.

**Ben Berlinger, Area**

Rangeland Management Specialist, La Junta Area Office, and **Dan Nosal**, Resource Management

Specialist, Franktown Field Office, were the two speakers at the Agate and Simla sessions.

Some of the topics included plant growth, palatability, grass response to grazing, Land EKG, and rangeland health.



**The NRCS and Fremont**

Conservation District will sponsor a tour hosted by the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (CSSRM).

The summer range tour will be held on Friday, June 29, on the Taylor/Oswald Ranch in Cotopaxi.

As recipients of the 2006 "Excellence in Rangeland Conservation" Award from the CSSRM, the Oswalds were recognized for their integrated approach to improve the health, vigor, and production of their rangeland resource base.

Contact Janet Barnhart, Conservation District Manager or **Kimberly Diller**, Rangeland Management Specialist, Canon City Field Office, at (719) 275-4465, Ext. 101.

## Area Four

### **The Dove Creek Field**

Office assisted the Dolores County School District in preparing for their April Earth Day celebration at 7th Street Elementary School.

The field office prepared a comprehensive recycling directory for each student. It provided information on all the recycling locations in the Four Corners area, including a breakdown of materials that each recycling center accepts.

Students from each grade walked through town and picked up trash along the streets and, using our information, separated items for recycling.

Using the letters from the words "Earth Day," we also prepared a list of actions the students could take in their own lives to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

The children were given an Earth Day History hand-out that explained the social climate that existed prior to this official designation.

The Dove Creek Conservation District continued their yearly participation in this event by again providing each student and

teacher with a seedling tree from their spring tree and shrub sales program.

These efforts, along with activities planned by 7th Street Elementary music teacher, Cathe Hill, provided a memorable and successful Earth Day celebration.

### **The Alamosa Field**

Office provided training on the Garmin GPSmap76 handheld units to two separate groups of field office personnel and District partners on May 8 and 10.

The GPS, or Global Positioning System, is a satellite-based navigation system. The Garmin Map76 GPS units are receiving devices that are used to compute positions on the Earth using information from the satellites.

NRCS uses these instruments to collect locational information about natural and other resources (location of existing structures, range transects, field boundaries, fences, etc.).

They also are used in the field to provide estimates of acreage and length (e.g., acreage of a producer's field or length of a proposed pipeline.).

The data can easily then be downloaded to Toolkit/ArcMap and used to produce a conservation plan or other type of map.



This technology saves time, is a valuable tool, and produces better information than in the past.

### **Valerie Lovett, Soil**

Conservationist, Durango Field Office, began spring-time activities in March. She attended Fort Lewis College to discuss the Farm Bill Programs to an agricultural senior seminar class.

The discussion started with a Powerpoint presentation of the history of the agency (thanks to Kelly Pace, NRI staff.).

In early April, Barnyard Days was held at Fort Lewis College for all first-grade students. Cows, horses, pigs, rabbits, goats, and puppies were all available for petting and feeding.

The event, sponsored by the Westerners Club, creates "ag awareness" to the school children.

In April, Lovett gave a soils presentation to the Cub Scouts. This field event was held by the Animas River. This presentation focused on the basic knowledge of soils and the natural resources around them.

In May, water festivals were in full swing.

# Water Quality through Cooperation

by *Tony Arnhold*  
*District Conservationist*  
*Walsenburg Field Office*

In February 2006, the Walsenburg Field Office and Upper Huerfano Conservation District (CD) noticed a change in the flow of the Cucharas River as it meanders through Walsenburg, Colo. The change was that it wasn't dry anymore as it had been through much of the winter. In addition, the water wasn't clear- and clean-looking Rocky Mountain water.

After asking a few questions we found out that the local coal bed gas operating company had several pumps come online to de-water the coal beds of the Raton Formation just south and west of Walsenburg.

After further investigation, we discovered that the company had discharge permits issued by the State of Colorado allowing them to pump this water and discharge it into the Cucharas River.

After Jim Conley, Colorado State University (CSU) Cooperative Extension (CE), Walsenburg, took a few water samples and analyzed them, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Huerfano CD discovered the quali-

ty of the water and realized that it could become a real problem. We immediately contacted Lorenz Sutherland, Resource Conservationist for Programs, La Junta Area Office, and yelled "Help!"

After contacting Lorenz and showing him the water sample results...he thought for a minute and then said, "You have a problem." At the request of the Huerfano County Commissioners, the NRCS and Huerfano CD formed a work group that included the local gas company. The newly-formed work group held a workshop in April 2006 for all the agricultural producers who were directly affected downstream on the Davis Ranch.

In the beginning, there was friction between all parties with everyone wanting the matter fixed right away. One problem was that the gas company was not going to stop de-watering the coal beds since they have a permit. The second problem was runoff for the 2006 season was minimal to none, so the producers had no other source of irrigation water for their crops.

Since the origination of the problems have been identified, the work group has grown to include NRCS, an NRCS Salinity

Specialist, Upper Huerfano CD, CSU CE, CSU Specialists and Petroglyph Operating Company.

This spring, we began a water sampling project at 16 points along the Cucharas. The first samples for this project were taken in early May. These samples will be taken weekly throughout the irrigation season and then monthly for at least one year.

Additional work being planned will be to monitor a minimum of two irrigated fields--one above the source of discharged water and one below.



Jim Conley, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, takes water samples from the Cucharas River, while Tom Melland, Petroglyph Operating Company, stands by.



# Techno Tips

## What is GSAT?

**y**ou may have recently noticed a new program on your computer. You may have also noticed a new folder under a Customer File called GSAT. So, **what is GSAT?**

GSAT stands for Grazingland Spatial Analysis Tool and it's a decision support tool that was developed to assist in conservation planning on grazing lands. This tool combines the inventory process of grazing lands with spatial analysis tools to provide accuracy and quick alternative assessments for resource planning.

GSAT offers the land planner a method to assess forage supply in relationship to animal demand, both domestic and wildlife. It offers a simple, clear process to generate new files or access existing files through Customer Service Tool Kit. Reports such as feed /forage and livestock/animal demand balance can be generated, as well as a comparative evaluation of each alternative. These reports can be recorded and saved in the customer's file to serve as documentation.

GSAT can be used in conjunction with Toolkit or as a stand-alone program. You may use the GIS tools to develop and graphically represent property boundaries and important features within the ownership.

GSAT provides an easy-to-use interface that will help you develop information for grazing plans. There are two major sections to GSAT: Client Data and Resource Data.

In Client Data, you can input, or download from Toolkit, plan, forage, roughage, and client's herd information, plus generate graphs and reports.

In Resource Data, you can generate animal profiles, growth curves, ecological site/forage suitability groups, and forage partitioning/pasture budgeting. Information such as ecological sites and growth curves can be loaded directly from ESIS to GSAT.

To see if you have GSAT, go to Program Files, USDA Applications, Grazing-Pasture Tools, and click on Grazing Spatial Analysis Tools. If you don't have the program and would like it, you will need to contact ITS.

If you would like help or more information on GSAT contact your nearest Range Conservationist that has had training on this program.



## LOOKS CAN KILL!

### Dalmation Toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*)

#### - Control Methods -

In addition to being a prolific seed producer, having an extensive root system and possessing an aggressive growth habit, its waxy leaves complicate control of this weed.



The waxy leaf surface can prevent herbicides from being taken up by the plant. Herbicides should be applied during the true flower stage, when the wax layer has diminished and has little impact.

#### **Mechanical**

Begin digging or pulling as soon as it greens up and repeat every 14-21 days until the first frost.

#### **Cultural**

Russian wildrye, pubescent wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, and crested wheatgrass can be planted to compete with dalmation toadflax.

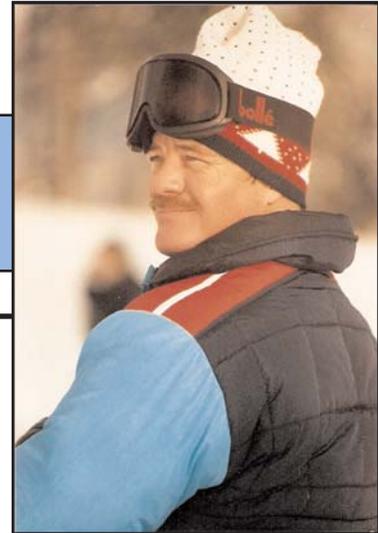
#### **Chemical**

For pastures and rangelands, 1 quart of Tordon per acre with a surfactant when it flowers.

# NRCS Remembers...

## Ricky Thomas Curtis Isom

December 1, 1949 - May 11, 2007



**Ricky Thomas Curtis Isom** was born on December 1, 1949 in Delta, Colorado to John R. (Bob) Sr. and Willa Dean Wilson Isom.

Rick died of pancreatic cancer on May 11, 2007, at his home in Austin, Colorado. He was 57 years old.

Rick was married to Michelle Fillipi at Lakewood, Colorado on June 26, 1982. Together they raised Rick's son, Michael.

Rick was a 1967 graduate of Delta High School, and attended Mesa College in Grand Junction. While at Mesa College, Rick was drafted to serve in the United States Army as a member of the 101st Airborne, Company A, Second Battalion (Airmobile), 506th Infantry.

Rick served in the Republic of Vietnam from February 21, 1970 until July 22, 1970 when serious injuries received near Firebase Ripcord brought him home. Those injuries resulted in his paraplegia.

As a member of the United States Army, Rick was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, Expert Pistol and Rifleman, the Good Conduct Medal, two Purple Hearts, and the Silver Star.

Rick later attended the

University of Nevada - Las Vegas where he received his Bachelor's degree. He continued his education at the University of Colorado - Denver, where he earned his Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning/Community Development.

Rick's career included being a private business owner, Community and Public Affairs Manager and Coordinator, Downtown Delta Development Coordinator, Interim City Manager for Delta, Architectural Designer, Draftsman, and Surveyor, Director of Rural Community Assistance for the U.S. Forest Service, and most recently, as Director of the Painted Sky Resource Conservation and Development.

Rick also was an accomplished wheelchair athlete. He was a member of the United States Disabled Ski Team from 1985 to 1990. He competed in the U.S. regional and national ski competitions, winning 25 U.S. National medals.

He also competed in international events in Sweden, Austria, Canada, New Zealand, and Winter Park, Colorado. He received the Bronze Medal in Giant Slalom as a member of the U.S. Ski Team for his performance in the 3rd Winter World Ski Championships in SÅlen, Sweden in 1986.

Rick was active as a ski racing instructor, closely involved in

the invention and development of technology for disabled skiing and racing, plus other adaptive equipment.

He was the past-president, cofounder, and member of the Black Canyon Posse Wheelchair Sports Team which pursues skiing, wheelchair basketball, tennis, hunting, and fishing.

Rick was active in counseling and the rehabilitation of persons with new injuries, as well as issues related to accessibility and design. His other interests included woodworking, inventing, camping, fishing, and above all, sharing time with his family and friends.

Rick was preceded in death by his mother, Willa Dean Isom. He is survived by his wife, Michelle; one son, Michael and his wife Kim Isom of Delta; his father, John R. Isom, Sr. of Delta; one brother, Bob and his wife Peggy Isom of Delta; and one sister, Mary Jane and her husband Victor Lightfoot of Weaver, Alabama.

Rick is survived by one grandson, Kayden Isom of Abilene, Texas; and two step-granddaughters, Kristi and Jamie Brandstadt of Delta.

# Help Spread the News!

## Camp Rocky



The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts'

**Outdoor Environmental Adventures For Youth**  
(Ages 14-19)

**July 8-14 2007**

**Near Divide, Colorado**

Camp Rocky is a week long, residential camp for ages 14 through 19 years who enjoy the outdoors and are interested in natural resources.

Camp Rocky staff, made up of resource professionals from around the state, helps participants learn about their environment while working in teams and meeting other students from across Colorado.

For more information about Camp Rocky and the costs, contact (970) 248-0070.

# Small Wind Workshop Well-Attended

*Submitted by Misty George  
Baca County Conservation District Manager*

It was an information-packed day for the 50 farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and rural school representatives who attended the Small Wind Workshop March 30th at Lamar Community College. The event was organized by Southeast Colorado RC&D and the Baca County Conservation District.

April Dahlager, of USDA Rural Development, began the afternoon event by detailing their renewable energy grant opportunities, which included eligibility requirements and the paperwork process.

Angela Crooks from the Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation followed by discussing what types of projects their office participates in.



photo courtesy of Area 3

Baca County's Small Wind Workshop provided the opportunity to investigate on-farm wind generation. Attendees came from as far as Colorado Springs to glean information.

James Wittler, Springfield NRCS, describe the cost-share dollars available on renewable energy projects through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Southeast Colorado RC&D provided refreshments during the afternoon break. Ravi Malhotra of the International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology (iCAST) gave the diverse crowd data on small wind generation.

"Small wind" describes turbines that generate 100 kilowatts and under. Ravi covered statistics on appropriately sizing the turbine to your needs and installation costs.

Jack Wolfe from Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) closed out the day's presentations. Jack detailed SECPA's interconnection policies, and made attendees aware of additional expenses, like insurance, that should be considered when exploring on-farm wind generation.

The take-home message of the day was that on-farm wind generation is a good way to offset your energy expenses. While a turbine is a significant capital expense, there are grants and cost-share dollars available.

Event sponsors included: Baca County Commissioners, Southeast Colorado RC&D, Baca County Conservation District, Colorado Department of Agriculture, iCAST, SECPA, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, and Lamar Community College.

# NRCS Employee Spot Light

*more than meets the eye*



## Ed Spence...District Conservationist by Day, Photographer By Night

Ed Spence, District Conservationist, Metro Field Office, began working with the agency in 1983 as a Soil Conservationist, first in Colorado Springs and then in Denver.

Prior to that, he worked as a Range Conservationist with the Bureau of Land Management in Farmington, NM and Carson City, NV.

After moving to Denver, Ed began hiking in the mountains and witnessed some of the most beautiful sites. It was then that his passion for photography really began.

But, Ed was no stranger to the world of photography. He owned his first "point and shoot" camera at the tender age of eight. He also took some photojournalism classes in college where he not only took pictures but also processed them in a lab.

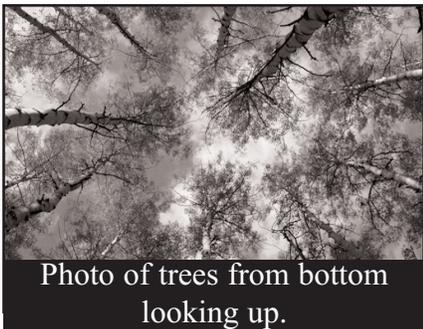


Photo of trees from bottom looking up.

western Colorado, around Ouray and Gunnison.

*"I want to spend some more time in the Grand Mesa area and start exploring the canyon lands of Utah,"* Ed said.

Over the years, Ed says he has taken thousands of photos of different subject matters. He says that he



"My favorite photo"...Ed Spence

has close to 600 photos of plants alone but his most favorite is probably the photo of a fox that he once photographed.

*"The fox jumped up on a stump about four feet from where I was standing and I dropped to one knee and took the picture,"* Ed recalled.

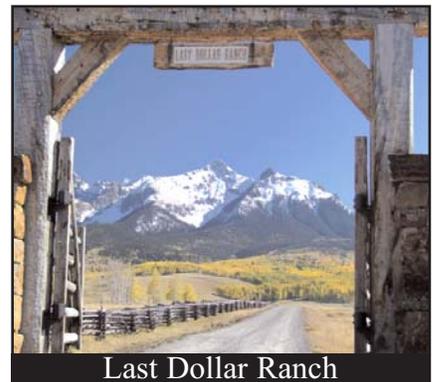
Ed has traveled along the coastline of California to capture photos. He has also visited and photographed an area in Pennsylvania where there are 30 waterfalls that sit just within three miles of each other.

Ed admits that photography doesn't come without its disadvantages. There are still some photos that he admits he has trouble taking.

*"Anything that involves being on site and having to be set up before sunrise poses the most difficulty for me,"* he said.

But despite the downfalls, Ed still enjoys photography as a hobby. He would eventually like to sell his photography for profit but still sees a need for self-improvement before he ventures in that direction.

*"I enjoy photography as a hobby right now,"* Ed said. *"It's my creative outlet. Some people do woodworking, remodel homes, or tend gardens...for me, it's photography."*



Last Dollar Ranch

# 2007 Earth Team Coloring Contest Honors Earth Day

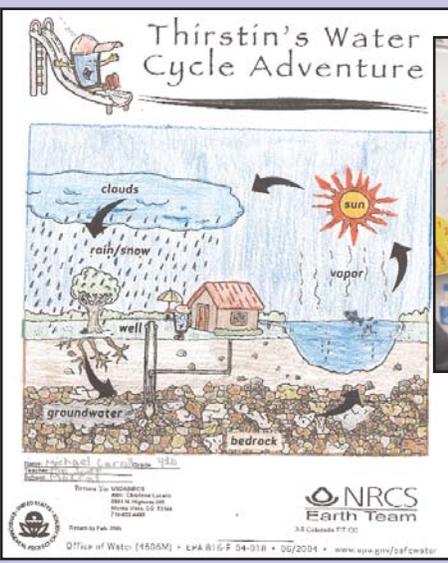
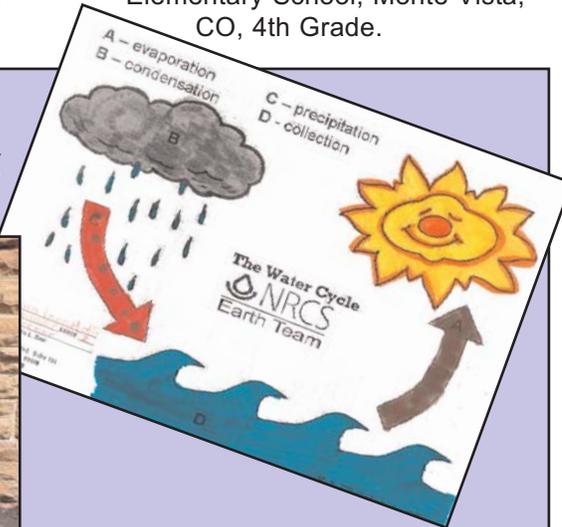
NRCS Earth Team hosted its third annual coloring contest in recognition of Earth Day. Earth Day is a nationwide celebration held on April 22nd that promotes "environmental goodwill" throughout communities and emphasizes the importance of protecting our environment and natural resources.

This year, thousands of coloring entries were received from elementary schools around Colorado. The "best of the

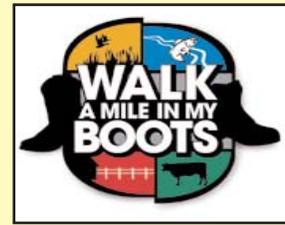
best" from all entries received were selected. The Area Earth Team Volunteer Coordinators presented awards to winners in their respective areas.

Two statewide winners were chosen from two categories: Grades K-2 and Grades 3-5. The two winners were: Andrea Langstaff, Meeker Elementary School, Meeker, CO, 2nd Grade; and Michael Carroll, Moffat Elementary School, Monte Vista, CO, 4th Grade.

**Below:** Andrea Langstaff, Meeker Elementary School, Meeker, CO, 2nd Grade, holds her "statewide" winning entry that beat out entries in the category of K-2 grade. Sandra Geer, Area Administrative Coordinator, made the presentation.



**Above:** Charlene Lucero, Area Administrative Coordinator, Monte Vista, presents Michael Carroll, Moffat Elementary School, Monte Vista, CO, 4th Grade, with an award for his winning "statewide" entry (left) in the category of 3-5 grade.



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partnered with the National Association of Conservation Districts, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2005 to pilot a work exchange program. The pilot program was successful and is now available nationwide.

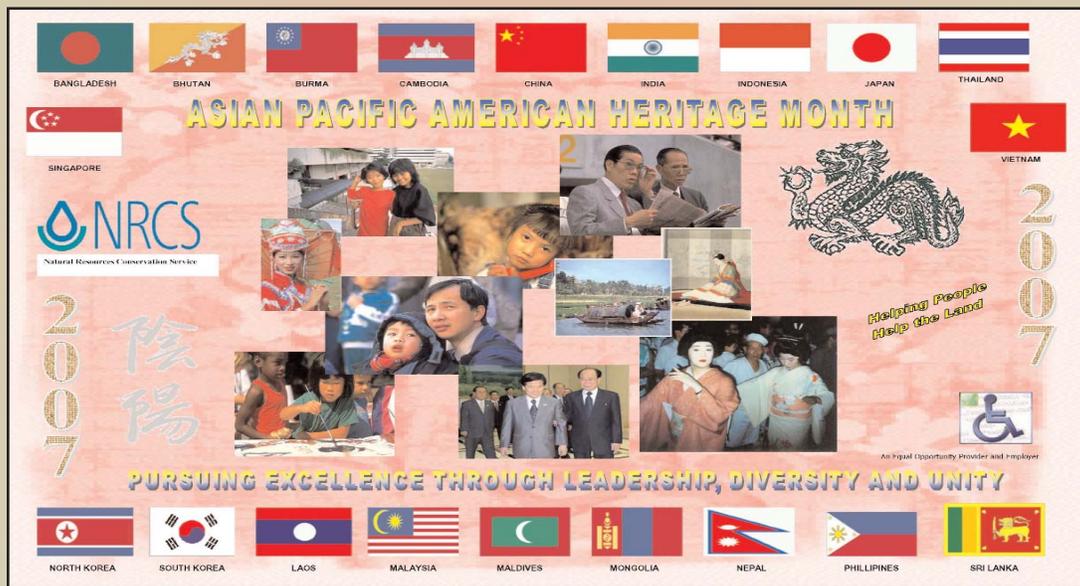
"Walk A Mile In My Boots" is a work exchange program that provides government employees and producers with substantive, on-the-ground work experiences in each other's respective professions. Under the program, any producer or Agency employee may participate.

During exchanges, ranchers and farmers will visit NRCS field offices, State offices, or National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., for a period of up to 2 weeks, where they will shadow a selected NRCS employee.

Ranchers and farmers will participate in the program as Earth Team volunteers and will be entitled to tort liability, workers' compensation, and other benefits as outlined in the General Manual.

If you or someone you know are interested in or have additional questions about the program, please contact Katherine Burse-Johnson, State Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator, 720-544-2863.

# Asian Pacific Islander Month



May is Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month—a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Much like Black History and Women's History celebrations, APA Heritage Month originated in a Congressional bill.

### Congressional Bills Establish Celebration

In June 1977, Representatives Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration.

### APA Becomes Month-long Celebration

In May 1990, the holiday was expanded further when President George H. W. Bush designated May to be Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated with community festivals, government-sponsored activities, and educational activities for students. This year's theme is "Lighting the Past, Present, and Future."

## Landowner Workshop/ Birding Tour

By *Tony Arnhold, Distict Conservationist  
Walsenburg Field Office*

The Walsenburg Field Office participated in a workshop/tour on April 26 held on the Stroh Ranch east of Walsenburg.

The event was sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), Upper Huerfano Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Presenters provided information to teach landowners about financial cost-share programs

through the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), the RMBO, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners for Wildlife (USFWS-PFW) and the NRCS.

**Tony Arnhold** and **Patty Moore**, Wildlife Biologist-Pueblo, spoke about the NRCS programs and how they can be used to assist landowners to enhance wildlife habitat.

Ed Schmal, CDOW Wildlife Biologist spoke about the

Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program (CHIP).

Katy Fitzgerald, USFWS-PFW, spoke about the Wetlands Reserve Program and Prairie Partners Program.

Approximately 24 private landowners toured a natural lake (playa) habitat to view birds and talk about birding opportunities as an alternative income. They also toured John Stroh's Ranch operation at Cucharas Reservoir.

# Better Management Means Greater Infiltration Rates

By Shana Harness, Soil Conservationist  
Delta Field Office

Partner agencies teamed up to foster an idea that has sparked the interest of those involved in irrigation.

Delta Conservation District and NRCS cooperated to submit a study in the correlation between soil infiltration rates and tillage management to the International Irrigation Conference.

**Randy Kramer**, Delta Conservation District Irrigation Water Management Specialist, and **Robert Molacek**, NRCS Delta Field Office Engineer, spearheaded the research project funded by the NRCS, Bureau of Reclamation, and Basin States Parallel Program.

Using a Cornell Infiltrometer as part of the Mobile Irrigation Labs to measure a soil's infiltration rate based on the soils hydraulic conductivity, it was found that soils on the western slope have consistently higher rates of infiltration than was previously published on the fact sheets.

*"The published infiltration rates are based on virgin soil with no tillage, no management, and no crop residue implemented,"* said Kramer. *"I knew based on experience that the infiltration rates were greater – but had no research numbers to back up the experience."*

**Dave Dearstyne**, NRCS Soil Scientist, is assisting in the project by helping quantify the management factor into the various soils types' hydraulic characteristics. They are working to find the "X" factor for normal tillage operations versus comprehensive operations.

Two years ago, the Delta Field Office implemented one center pivot sprinkler; this year, 20 center pivots are planned.

*"Our learning curve is steep over here. We just want to find a correlation between the book values and the management,"* Kramer said.

He has completed initial testing on 10 soil types under 13 different management practices that have tighter soils and present "worst case scenarios" for slow infiltration rates.

He has been surprised at the higher numbers coming back and has plans for evaluations on 10 more sites. The project is picking up steam and is causing interest in other areas of the state from NRCS personnel who would like to participate.

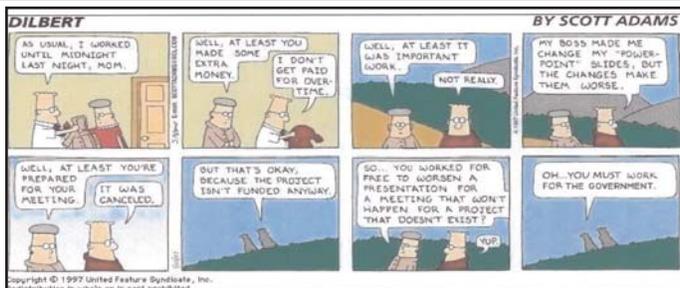
This information will prove invaluable when Soil Conservationists and Technicians plan and design future sprinkler irrigation systems.



**Top photo:** Randy Kramer with the Cornell Infiltrometer

**Middle photo:** Robert Molacek, left, and Randy Kramer, right, conducting the tests

**Bottom photo:** Dave Dearstyne, NRCS Soil Scientist, completing an on site soils test



## Congratulations to....

**Noe Marymor**, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, and **Dan Thompson**, Wildlife Biologist, on being selected to participate the 2007 Leadership Institute sponsored by the Wildlife Society.

# Natural Resources Conservation Service - Colorado

**Mobile Irrigation Labs**



**Colorado's tried-and-true tool in water conservation and effectiveness**

APRIL 2007

## The Service is Free!

*"Improving and sustaining the quality and quantity of Colorado's water is one of NRCS's highest priorities and the MILs are exactly what Colorado needs to ensure this."*

**Jason Peel**  
**NRCS Irrigation Water Management Specialist (IWMS)**



Mobile Irrigation Labs (MILs) are specialized labs on wheels that were developed to help people conserve water by evaluating irrigation systems and their operation.

This voluntary non-regulatory approach to water conservation is offered as a free public service to both the urban and agricultural communities.

The MIL technician will schedule an appointment for an evaluation with anyone who operates irrigation systems.

The evaluation begins with an on-site observation and measurements of the system in operation. The information collected is analyzed to identify problems and a confidential summary report makes recommendations for system improvements.

The NRCS shares the funding and technical expertise in educating the public on irrigation management and water conservation with the Colorado State Conservation Board, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, and the Bureau of Reclamation.



### The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands.

**Reserve Yours Today!**

[www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov)

Helping People Help the Land

**For more information contact:**

Jason Peel, IWMS  
 (720) 544-2817

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.